

Components of a Collegiate Sports Drug Testing Program

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The primary components of a drug-testing program include a detailed written policy, educational opportunities for student-athletes, drug-testing procedures and consequences for positive drug tests - including a consistent adjudication process and provisions for substance use and abuse treatment for student-athletes. The ultimate goal of any drug-testing program is to influence change in human behavior. To create change in behavior, all of the above components must be carefully observed and practiced.⁷

I. Policy

1. Specific written policy must be developed, distributed to all participants and publicized. Include in the policy:
 - a. Clear explanation of the purposes for the drug-testing program,
 - b. Description of who will be tested and by what methods,
 - c. The banned drug list,
 - d. Description of the types of testing,
 - e. Consequences for positive drug tests,
 - f. Description of the appeal process
2. Athletic organizations should also include a process for addressing substance abuse including;
 - A systematic approach for student-athlete treatment and rehabilitation.
 - All student-athletes must be provided with these policies in advance of implementing a drug-testing program.
 - Student-athletes must provide written consent to the administering organization indicating that he/she has received, read and agrees to the policy as it applies to participation within the organization.⁹
3. The very foundation of any drug-testing program is the document that states the program's goals, regulations and procedures.⁷ Written drug-testing policies should be carefully developed, reviewed and, when necessary, edited on an annual basis.

II. Purpose

1. The purpose of drug testing must be clearly explained in the introduction of any adopted policy.
 - a. Consider opposing viewpoints, i.e. those against drug testing.
 - b. Goals of drug testing in intercollegiate athletics:
 1. To deter the use of banned substances

2. Identify individuals who have substance abuse problems
 3. Provide access to treatment for such problems⁷
- c. Secondary to ethical and health reasons for drug testing:
1. Organizations may also include detecting drug use
 2. Enforcing banned drug lists
 3. Punishing those found to be using banned substances and deterring drug dependency
 4. Protecting student-athletes from injury
 5. Enhancing the role model perceptions of student-athletes
 6. Minimizing criminality
2. Properly conceived and implemented, a drug-testing program can also serve as an educational vehicle.¹⁵
 3. Signs and symptoms of drug use may not be apparent upon observation even to the trained eye.
 - a. Drug testing provides a very definitive method of detecting use of controlled or illegal substances.
 - b. In addition, the threat of a positive drug test and the resulting consequences may deter or prevent student-athletes from using these substances.¹²
 - i. Testing and fear of detection forces a person to make the affirmative decision not to use drugs in an uncontrolled or illegal manner.¹³
 4. Deterrent effect is only present if policies are consistently enforced. The only thing worse than not drug testing is having a drug testing program and not enforcing it.

III. Banned Substances

1. Any sports organization adopting a drug-testing program must develop a list of drugs for which student-athletes will be tested. This should include:
 - a. Performance-enhancing substances
 - b. Illicit drugs found to be detrimental to the health and well being of student-athletes.
2. Timing and purpose of performance-enhancing substances should be considered to deter use through drug testing. For example, drug testing during competition may not adequately identify users of anabolic agents.
3. Banned drug lists should be included in any drug-testing policy, readily available to participants and updated regularly to adequately address drug use issues in sport.

4. Banned drug lists are available from respective athletic organizations.

IV. Testing Types and Methods

1. Consider logistical and technical issues
2. Types and methods must be described in the drug testing policy.
3. Several types of testing available for sports drug testing
 - a. Random drug testing
 - i. Most popular type of testing used; is applied year-round to deter drug use and identify users
 - ii. Maintain a complete and accurate list of student-athletes
 - iii. Random selection of student-athletes for periodic testing
 - iv. Should be frequent, unpredictable and unannounced.
 - vi. Selection process should be completely objective
 - vii. Student-athletes should be notified and required to report site within pre-set time
 - viii. Effective in deterring and identifying performance-enhancing and "social/designer" drugs
 - ix. Notification of the student-athlete should be as short as logistically possible.
 1. Maximum time should be 24 hours prior to test
 - x. Must not interfere with academic schedules or practices.
 - b. Reasonable suspicion testing
 - i. Selectively test a student-athlete based on specific objective facts and reasonable inferences
 - ii. Must be based on physical symptoms or manifestations (e.g., odor of alcohol)
 - iii. Direct observation of prohibited use
 - iv. A report of prohibited use from a reliable source or evidence of use, possession and sale, etc. of prohibited drugs
 - vi. A student-athlete notified of reasonable suspicion testing must immediately submit to a drug test
 - c. Other type of tests
 - i. Pre-participation testing to identify drug-induced at-risk student-athletes
 - ii. Follow-up testing on student-athletes with previous positive drug tests

iii. Monitoring of student-athletes following drug use interventions
iv. Pre-competition drug testing on student-athletes qualified for events where he/she will be subject to drug testing by other sports organizations

4. Testing methods and procedures should also be described in the written drug testing policy.

- a. Include:
- i. Type(s) of specimens to be used for testing
 - ii. The collection protocol that will be followed in collecting specimens from student-athletes
 - iii. Chain of custody procedures
 - iv. Laboratory procedures and methods of specimen analysis

V. *Consequences*

1. Describe the procedures for reporting results including:
 - a. Who receives results
 - b. Who notifies the student-athletes
 - c. Who the student-athlete is referred to for evaluation
 - d. Who is granted knowledge of a positive drug test
 - e. What disciplinary action is imposed for a positive drug test

2. Confidentiality is of primary concern when communicating a positive drug test.
 - a. These results must be reviewed to determine if there is an acceptable explanation for the test result.
 - b. A medical review of these results is essential prior to labeling a student-athlete as testing positive under the program's policies.
 - c. Once deemed positive under the definition of the program policy,
 - i. administrators must implement procedures for handling a positive drug test.
 - ii. program director will meet with the student-athlete to discuss the nature and extent of drug use and to apply sanctions for policy violations as described.
 - iii. Sanctions for a positive drug test often include:
 1. Immediate suspension from sport participation until the student-athlete can be evaluated by medical and substance abuse specialists to determine the risks associated with physical exercise and prohibited

drug use and a treatment plan for the student-athlete is implemented.

with
test results
written policy.

2. Other consequences such as refusal to comply with procedures or repeated positive drug test results must also be described in the written policy.

VI. Appeal

1. All drug-testing programs must include an appeal

2. The appeal process should include:

a. A designated committee made up of representatives from various athletics (e.g., medicine, technical experts, third party administrators and collectors) may also serve as consultants to the committee when such matters are involved in the nature of the appeal,

3. Civil cases require only that the preponderance of evidence support the finding of doping activity.²

4. Following a hearing, the committee's decision will ultimately be accepted and any subsequent sanctions applied.

5. The goal of effectively modifying behavior can only occur when the consequences are widely believed to impose accurate and even-handed results.¹¹

VII. Treatment

1. At the very least, treatment should provide

a. Accurate and current information on the health hazards of drug abuse

b. Help users overcome drug dependence

c. Be directed based on age,

d. Interests and special problems of student-athletes,

e. Emphasize immediate negative effects from drug use

f. Hold the student-athlete accountable for his/her actions¹⁴

VIII. Participants in the testing process

1. The legal aspects involved with each organization should be clarified.

2. Involve representatives from various relevant entities in developing a policy

a. Academic departments and disciplines (e.g., pharmacology, chemistry, and psychology),

b. Athletics administrators,

c. Student-athletes,

d. Athletic trainers and

e. Medical doctors

3. *Donor (Student-athlete)*
- a. May include:
 - i. Student-athletes
 - ii. Cheerleaders
 - iii. Managers
 - iv. Athletic training students
 - b. Organization's drug-testing policies must identify and
define all donors subject to drug testing
 - c. Donors must be provided with the drug testing policies
 - d. Administrators of the program should describe drug testing
in detail.
 - e. Each donor must read and sign a drug testing consent form
consent testing.
 - i. if underage, parents of the donor must also sign the
form prior to specimen collection and
 - f. Donor will be expected to follow policies and procedures
 - g. Failure to abide by the policies usually has consequences
similar to that of a positive drug test.
 - i. These consequences should also be included in the
written policy.

4. *Drug Testing Administrator*
- a. Individual responsible for administering the program.
 - b. Responsible for:
 - i. financially managing and overseeing compliance with
the entire program.
 - ii. coordinating annual review and policy disseminating
to all participants
 - iii. collecting signed consent forms from donors
 - iv. scheduling required drug education programs and
testing events for participants
 - v. coordinating other individuals or entities with
responsibilities related to drug testing
 - c. Administrator may or may not have additional duties
associated with actual drug testing and results handling.
 - d. Often athletic trainers, but a conflict of interest may arise.
 - i. Consider delegating or outsourcing components:
 - 1. Collections
 - 2. Results reporting
 - 3. Applying sanctions

5. *Third Party Administrators (TPAs)*
- a. Provide expertise and objectivity
to-day
 - 1. Allow athletic department freedom to focus on day-
 - 2. Provide trained specimen collectors

- 3. Laboratory discounts through consortium efforts
 - 4. Independently administered random selection
- services
- 5. Medical Review Officer (MRO) expertise
- b. When determining outside agencies, consider:
- 1. The value of time expended by the internal staff to perform these duties
 - 2. Utilizing experts with extensive and detailed training further supports the effectiveness and ultimately the success of a drug-testing program
6. *Collectors*
- a. collectors must:
- 1. Be trusted to perform his/her job professionally
 - 2. Provide for privacy while ensuring integrity of the specimen throughout the entire collection process
 - 3. Be knowledgeable in sports drug-testing issues
 - 4. Maintain the skills necessary to perform specimen collections in a consistent manner
 - 5. Be adequately trained and maintain proficiency in collection techniques
- b. Trained collectors eliminate costly and legally challenging custody errors
- c. collectors deter specimen adulteration, substitution and manipulation
- d. If an organization elects to perform its own collections, care must be taken when determining who will be responsible for collection
- with
- 1. athletic trainers may compromise their relationship with student-athletes
 - i. confidence issues
 - ii. time costs on overworked employees
 - 2. Pharmacists are excellent candidates for drug-testing
 - i. develop and conduct drug-testing protocols
 - ii. educate student-athletes, coaches and trainers about drug use and abuse;
 - iii. help ensure the safe and effective use of medications.¹

- medical candidates.
- can
- specimen collector specimen; laboratory specimen collections,
3. Other medical professionals such as nurses or technologists are also strong
 4. Third party administrators and collection companies also provide specimen collections.
 5. There are also unacceptable candidates for collections.
 - i. Student-athlete cannot serve as a for his or her own
 - ii. Employees of any participating should not perform
 - iii. Collectors of opposite gender cannot perform direct observation collections

7. Laboratories

- of drug reliability and
- from authority national anti-doping Code accredited
- a. Credentialed laboratories are vital to the ultimate success deterrence.
 1. Accreditation and certification demonstrate quality assurance⁶
 2. Request verification of the laboratory's standards of accreditation
 3. World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) as the official accrediting body for laboratories
 - i. WADA's Requirements include
 1. Providing an official letter of support the relevant national public responsible for the program
 2. Signing and complying with WADA's of Ethics
 3. Proficiency testing of samples
 4. Sharing of knowledge with other laboratories
 5. Strong commitment to research.
 4. Laboratories engaged in urine drug testing for federal agencies must be SAMHSA certified.

8. Medical Review Officer (Results Recipient)

- there is a
- a. Utilized to review positive drug test results to determine if legitimate reason for the positive result.

- b. A licensed physician with a working knowledge of substance abuse disorders
- c. In sports drug testing programs, the team physician is often designated to receive positive drug test results to review for possible legitimate medical reasons contributing to the confirmed positive result.
- d. Results should be handled as part of a student-athlete's medical record and protected from disclosure by the laws protecting confidentiality of medical documents.
- e. The Medical Review Officer must:
 - i. Maintain confidential records
 - ii. Assure adequate medical review of positive results
 - iii. Present verified positive results reports to the individual responsible for meeting with the student-athlete and other designated parties to disclose the result, apply consequences, facilitate the appeal process if requested and/or refer for necessary counseling and/or treatment
- f. Laboratories are capable of providing results to the designated individual via a number of secure methods.

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